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"Partnering for a better Louisiana"

August 30, 2011

Senator Jack Donahue, Chairman
Commission on Streamlining Government
P.O. Box 44481
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Chairman Donahue,

Pursuant to the Initial Report Recommendation 188 of the Commission on Streamlining Government, the Department of State Civil Service (DSCS) has issued this report detailing the requested information on span of control, also known as supervisor to staff ratios. Please see attached.

If you have questions regarding the information contained in this report, please feel free to contact me at 225 342-8272 or Shannon.Templet@la.gov.

Sincerely,

s/ Shannon S. Templet
Director

EX:ST:mcm



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
CIVIL SERVICE

INFORMATION REQUEST

Report on Span of Control

January 20, 2011

SPAN OF CONTROL REPORT

ISSUED: 1/20/2011

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 77 of the Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, as well as the Initial Report Recommendation 188 of the Commission on Streamlining Government, the Department of State Civil Service (DSCS) has issued this report detailing the requested information on span of control, also known as supervisor to staff ratios. Recommendation 188 also requires that DSCS provide this information on an annual basis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

After extensive research and repeated attempts to gather information from many states, we have found that there is very little information regarding national span of control recommendations. For some professions, national accrediting bodies may recommend maximum caseloads and the maximum number of subordinates per supervisor that should not be exceeded, but none recommend minimum or optimal levels. We have accreditation information for particular job series such as Residential Services Specialists, Correctional Officers, Social Workers, etc. There is also some information regarding span of control maximums and caseload requirements from several accrediting entities.

This report is a summary of research we conducted on the span of control issue. Our research illustrates two key points:

1. There is no universal definition of span of control
2. There is no universal optimal span of control ratio

Each agency determines span of control for their agency and should ensure that they include a definition when reporting these numbers to other entities. Here are some ways agencies may want to consider defining span of control:

1. Top administrators to all other employees
2. All first line supervisors (supervisory group 1) to all non supervisory employees
3. All managers (supervisory groups 2 and 3) to all other employees
4. All supervisory positions (supervisory groups 1, 2, and 3) to all other employees

5. All employees who conduct Performance and Planning Reviews (PPR) to those who do not

When counting subordinates, management will need to consider whether or not to count intermittent employees, student workers, etc. As previously stated, agencies should clearly define which groups of employees are counted in span of control ratios.

INTRODUCTION:

In December 2009, the Louisiana State Senate Commission on Streamlining Government adopted Recommendation 188 which stated:

The Department of State Civil Service, with the support of the Legislative Auditor, should examine the supervisor-to-staff ratios, within each program in executive branch agencies and determine whether the ratio is appropriate based on the particularized circumstances and data from the industry. The department should report annually to the State Civil Service Commission and the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget as to the programs examined, the ratio, and the propriety of that ratio. The data should be maintained in the Integrated Statewide Information System (ISIS) or any successor data information system.

DEFINITION OF SPAN OF CONTROL:

Span of control has various definitions, thus there is no universal definition of span of control used by all entities. Span of control is commonly defined as the number of subordinates that can be effectively supervised by one supervisor or manager. It can be defined and calculated as the number of managers to subordinates, the number of supervisors to subordinates, all jobs that evaluate employee performance against all jobs which do not evaluate performance, etc. Also, there is no one ratio that can be applied globally to all occupations. There are several factors that influence the optimal span of control which are listed below.

Factors which favor a narrow span of control (i.e. fewer subordinates per supervisor)

- Subordinate jobs are complex, less routine, and more likely to require management involvement
- Subordinates are geographically dispersed from the supervisor
- There is great variation in the type of work performed by different subordinates reporting to the same supervisor
- The job or working conditions are undergoing change (e.g., reorganization, new technology or work processes, downsizing, or expansion)
- A large portion of subordinates are inexperienced or relatively new to the job
- Legal requirements in fields such as child protection, healthcare, or criminal justice

Factors which favor a wide span of control (i.e. more subordinates per supervisor)

- Subordinate jobs are simple, routine or consist of well-defined, repetitive tasks
- Supervisor and subordinates work in the same geographic location
- Subordinates reporting to a supervisor all do the same or very similar types of work
- Working conditions and processes are relatively stable
- Supervisors and most subordinates are experienced and knowledgeable about their jobs
- Technology (e.g., cell phones, laptops, or e-mail) to enhance communication between supervisors and subordinates is available

DETERMINING SPAN OF CONTROL RATIOS:

In 2009, a span of control analysis conducted by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor provided this key statement:

“We attempted to compare supervisor to staff ratios in Louisiana to other states or to find standards for what these ratios should be. However, it was difficult to find any model ratios as these ratios depend on factors such as the nature of the occupation and geographic locations. In addition, some occupations and agencies may have accreditation standards that mandate certain ratios. However, the 1995 SECURE report recommends a 1:10 ratio for state agencies but states that a 1:5 ratio may be necessary for highly technical, policy or non-repetitive functions.”

The Louisiana Legislative Auditor’s analysis of ISIS data in 2009 showed that the overall average supervisor to staff ratio for classified employees in executive branch agencies was 1:4. Because supervisor to staff data was not reported in ISIS or to the Department of State Civil Service (DSCS), the Legislative Auditor worked with DSCS to develop two different methodologies using ISIS data to evaluate these ratios. However, both analyses were limited by the completeness of the data in ISIS.

Overall, the average supervisor to staff ratio for classified employees in executive branch state agencies was approximately 1:4 in 2009. The Legislative Auditor identified two methodologies that were used to estimate this ratio.

1. In the first analysis, the Legislative Auditor counted the number of classified employees considered supervisors and the number of classified employees considered staff. DSCS uses nine levels of work to categorize classified job titles. These levels are based on the duties assigned to specific jobs. According to ISIS data as of March 2009, this analysis resulted in a ratio of one supervisor to every 3.6 employees (1:3.6).
2. In the second analysis, the Legislative Auditor evaluated the number of supervisors to staff per state agency. ISIS Performance Planning and Review (PPR) data was used to determine the number of supervisors who evaluated employees since supervisors are

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supposed to rate employees who they directly supervise. The Legislative Auditor found that the overall ratio in this analysis was 1:4.2.

Since there is no universal standard for defining span of control, each agency must determine the appropriate definition of span of control for their workforce and provide that definition when reporting span of control ratios. There will be variation in span of control ratios which is attributable to the differing diversity, complexity, volume, and scope of work within occupations. There are many factors that are instrumental in determining an optimal span of control for an agency. Agencies will need to decide what their optimal span of control should be for various jobs and analyze these areas and the nature of the jobs when reporting these numbers to other entities.

Here are some ways agencies may want to consider calculating span of control ratios:

1. Top administrators to all other employees
2. All first line supervisors (supervisory group 1) to all non supervisory employees
3. All managers (supervisory groups 2 and 3) to all other employees
4. All supervisory positions (supervisory groups 1, 2, and 3) to all other employees
5. All employees who conduct Performance and Planning Reviews to those who do not

When counting subordinates, management will need to consider all factors such as whether or not to count intermittent employees, student workers, etc. As previously stated, agencies should clearly define which groups of employees are counted in span of control ratios. For example, at the Louisiana Department of Corrections, a Corrections Lieutenant is categorized as a supervisory job title and may only supervise inmates. This position would not conduct PPRs and would not be counted using the PPR rater method for calculating supervisor to subordinate ratios. However, this position would be counted using different methods such as categorizing jobs by level of work and supervisory groups.

ACCREDITING ORGANIZATION STANDARDS:

Accrediting organizations are national or regional private agencies that develop guidelines and perform evaluations. These organizations also issue credentials and certification of competence in a specified subject or areas of expertise. There are accrediting bodies for all sectors including education, healthcare, criminal justice, social services, engineering, etc.

There are very few accreditation bodies that recommend span of control ratios. For some professions, national accrediting bodies may recommend maximum caseloads and the maximum number of subordinates per supervisor that should not be exceeded, but none recommend minimum or optimal levels. Caseload and supervisory limits are recommended due to the risk of compromising quality control when they are exceeded. Below is a listing of accreditation bodies we surveyed and their recommendations.

- American Correctional Association (ACA):** The American Correctional Association, formerly known as the American Prison Association, is the oldest and largest international correctional association in the world. Approximately 80% of all state departments of corrections and youth services are active participants. Also included are programs and facilities operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the private sector. ACA standards require at least 1 manager per 10 staff members for accreditation for probation and parole employees.
- Council on Accreditation (COA):** COA is an international, independent, not-for-profit, child and family-service and behavioral healthcare accrediting organization. It partners with human service organizations worldwide to improve service delivery outcomes by developing, applying, and promoting accreditation standards. COA recommends that generally supervisory ratios do not exceed 1:8.

Caseload Recommendations	
Child Protective Services	Caseloads generally do not exceed 15 investigations or 15-30 open cases per employee.
Foster Care Services	Caseloads generally do not exceed 18 children or 8 special needs children per employee.
Adoption Services	Caseloads generally do not exceed 12-25 families per employee.

- Child Welfare League of America (CWLA):** The Child Welfare League of America is the oldest child welfare organization in the United States. The CWLA is the trusted authority for professionals who work with children and the only national organization with members from both public and private agencies, providing unique access and influence to all sectors of the children's services field.

Caseload Recommendations for Child Welfare	
Initial Assessment/Investigations	Caseloads generally do not exceed 12 active cases per month per social worker.
Ongoing Cases	Caseloads generally do not exceed 17 active families per social worker.
Supervision	Typically 1 supervisor per 5 social workers.

Supervisor-to-Staff Ratio Service Area Standard	
Child Protective Services	A supervisor is responsible for supervising no more than seven workers who are experienced and/or five workers who have less professional education and experience.
Foster and Kinship Care Services	Maximum supervisor to caseworker ratio is 1:5
Family Centered Casework: Intensive Family Preservation	Maximum of one supervisor to each of five to eight practitioners or teams and appropriately modified for total number of families represented, experience levels of practitioners, geographic distances, size of teams, and other relevant factors.

- Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO):** The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations is an independent, not-for-profit organization that accredits and certifies more than 18,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States and covers hospitals and inpatient facilities. JCAHO does not issue any type of span of control ratios or caseload/patient care maximums. It states that each healthcare facility must be properly staffed, but gives no definition of what “properly staffed” should be. Staffing ratios would be dependent upon the area of patient care where more critical patients/complex care would need more staff.
- American Probation and Parole Association (APPA):** The American Probation and Parole Association is an international association involved with probation, parole and community-based corrections, in both adult and juvenile sectors. All levels of government are counted among its constituents. The APPA does not issue information regarding span of control. It issues maximum caseload standards for adult and juvenile cases based on level of risk. For example, moderate to high risk adult cases should have a caseload to staff ratio of no more than 50 cases per staff member.

STATE PRACTICES:

A survey on span of control was disseminated to various states throughout the country via the National Association for State Personnel Executives (NASPE) and the Southeastern and Central States Compensation Associations. We received responses from 21 states. The overwhelming majority do not track span of control, nor do they have any type of legislative mandates to do so. Of the 21 responses, 19 states do not formally track span of control. Only Texas and Virginia formally track span of control. Also, Texas is the only state with a legislative mandate that was adopted in 2003. Virginia tracks span of control and reports its outcomes every performance cycle, but there is no legislative mandate.

State	Do you track span of control?	What is your ratio and how do you define it?	Do you have legislative mandates regarding ratios?
Alabama	No	No ratio	No
Colorado	No	No ratio, but defines supervisors and managers based on FTE.	No
Florida	No	No ratio	No
Kansas	No	No ratio	No
Kentucky	No	No ratio	No
Minnesota	No	No ratio	No
Montana	No	No ratio	No
Nebraska	No	No ratio, but would define it as first line supervisors and managers.	No
Nevada	No	No ratio	No
New Hampshire	No	No ratio	No
New Mexico	No	In 2003, incoming Gov recommended 1:11 ratio but not implemented.	No

North Carolina	No	No ratio	No
North Dakota	No	No ratio	No
Oklahoma	No	No ratio	No
Pennsylvania	No	No ratio, but encourage no smaller than 1:3 span of control.	No
Tennessee	No	No ratio	No
Texas	Yes	Texas has a mandate from 2003 to implement 1:11 ratio by 2008, but it has not been achieved. Ratios are calculated as all non supervisory employees to all supervisors and managers, excluding the top agency executive.	Yes. Implemented in 2003.
Utah	No. Span of control is not tracked on a formal basis. Only reports on span of control when requested.	Ratio as of 10/13/10 was 1:6.9. Span of control is defined as supervisor, manager or director with at least one report.	No. However, the Gov's Commission on Optimization made a recommendation that HRM determine what an optimal span of control is and suggest ways in which this can be achieved.
Virginia	Yes	Ratio is 1:4.1. This is calculated as the number of employees who do not evaluate performance divided by the number those who do.	No

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Washington	No	No	No
Wisconsin	No	No	No

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